Death of whale

42. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a dead whale with injury marks was found on Orissa coast on 20th December, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have been able to establish causes of its death and identify those responsible for its death;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such incident?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, it is a fact that a dead Minkey whale was found on 19th November, 2005, floating in the shallow coastal waters near the sea shore off the Kantiakhai Forest block on the northern border of the Bhitarkanika National Park. The body was badly putrefied, but no injury marks on the body have been reported. The dead whale measured 24' long and 14' mid-girth.

(c) and (d) As reported by the State Government of Orissa, the death of the whale may have occurred in deep seas, after which the carcass was washed to the shore. The carcass was lying in a remote and inaccessible spot due to which the post-mortem could not be performed. Hence it has not been possible to ascertain the cause of death as well as to identify those responsible for the death.

(e) The different species of whales have been included in Schedules I & II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby according highest degree of protection against hunting and trade. Awareness programmes have also been taken up by the States to increase awareness about conservation of this species. India is also a signatory to the International Whaling Commission pledging support for protection of whales globally.

Loss of forest cover, mangroves and wetlands

43. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state: